

thirsty beauty he called hussein, the oil hound.  
it's been over a year now, hussein still shows  
an arrogant power, burning oily loops of 50 wt.  
as it idles by the curb.

#### DIACRITIC

I knew she was literary.  
She even had diacritic marks  
Over the tattoos on her arms  
With acute & grave accents  
As well as the cidilla & circum-  
Flex. I swore she wore  
The very flesh of poetry & once  
Aroused to indignation by my stare  
She dropped her Levis & mooned me.  
No big deal. I was only going to ask her  
To a poetry reading at the American  
Sunbathing Association, plenty of time  
To know each other because that would be  
Sometime late next summer.

#### BARBARA BY THE SEA

— for Barbara at 92,  
Avila Beach, California

When a new taco stand  
Pops up in Avila Beach  
Miss Barbara tastes  
Each offering  
Like Minerva strolling  
Through the Parthenon.  
"If I want it hot  
I'll sit on my stove,"  
She says to an anxious  
Chef, "but your enchilada,  
Honey, was made for the gods."

#### BE PROUD YOU ARE AN INTELLECTUAL

When the old Russian poet visiting our school  
told us about Stalin, long Siberian nights  
and fellow prisoners leaching salt  
from the guard's beating canes  
for their rations of frozen potatoes  
we stopped badgering our parents  
for more all-day burritos and double-orders  
of fries  
washed down with perplexing decisions  
between coke, pepsi, mountain dew and doctor



pepper.

He told us to go to the library  
because they are all over our great country,  
warm in winter, cool in summer,  
librarians wearing pretty dresses —  
spend time there, he said, learn something  
interesting to you as an individual,  
be like I am, he said, stand up for things  
you believe in, be proud you are an  
intellectual.

— Ray Clark Dickson

Shell Beach CA

#### HOW CAN I WHINE?

How can I whine when Floyd Patterson, knocked down seven  
times in three rounds, says, "I'm the only guy to  
get up seven times in a championship fight"?

How can I whine when everyday I see the same guy running  
on the side of the road — in the cold, in the rain —  
looking down at his watch?

How can I whine with Mother Teresa bathing the wounds  
of lepers in Calcutta and shunning interviews?

How can I whine when I see mad wheelchair racers in  
the Olympics trying to break records?

How can I whine when Bob Gibson, his leg broken by a  
Roberto Clemente line drive, still manages to  
throw two pitches to the next batter before  
he collapses?

How can I whine when my grandfather is separated from  
his family for seven years while he makes enough  
money in America to send for them from across  
the sea?

How can I whine when the first time my grandfather sees  
my father is when my father is seven years old?

How can I whine when my uncle and father are told by  
my grandfather when they are in the eighth grade:  
"Whaddya gonna do — go to school all your life?"

How can I whine when the young Beatles play 8-10 hours  
a day in sleazy Hamburg bars — taking turns sleeping  
on stage while the others play?